

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

A detailed listing of all claims that are, or were, in the present application, irrespective of whether the claim(s) remains under examination in the application are presented below. The claims are presented in ascending order and each includes one status identifier.

Claims 1-25 (Canceled).

26. (Previously Presented) A method of enabling two aircraft components to be joined together, said method including the steps of

providing a first aircraft component having a surface to be joined to a corresponding surface of a second aircraft component, said first and second components being so shaped that if joined there would be a gap defined between said surfaces of said first and second components,

providing a resin infusion system comprising a source of resin,

effecting flow of said resin from said source of resin into said gap by means of suction, thereby substantially filling said gap with resin, and

curing said resin,

wherein the flow of the resin out of the gap is restricted by means of a barrier and at least a part of the barrier is formed by a surface of said resin infusion system.

27. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26 wherein said surface of said resin infusion system is provided by a moulding tool.

28. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein said barrier is, during the filling of said gap with resin, removably fixed in position relative to said first aircraft component.

29. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 28, wherein said barrier is fixed to said first aircraft component by means of a pressure difference.

30. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 29, wherein a single vacuum pump is used both to cause said pressure difference and to provide the suction that draws said resin into said gap.

31. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein said resin is cured while between said first aircraft component and said barrier.

32. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 31, wherein after said resin is cured said first component and said barrier are separated.

33. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein a surface of said first aircraft component is prepared so that adherence of said resin to said surface of said first aircraft component is improved, a surface of said barrier is prepared so that the adherence of the resin to said surface of said barrier is reduced to facilitate separation of said barrier from said resin once cured.

34. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein the method includes a step of joining said second aircraft component to said first aircraft component, after said resin has cured.

35. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein a filter is provided to hinder flow of said resin out of said gap.

36. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein said first aircraft component includes at least one aperture arranged so that the suction is provided via said at least one aperture.

37. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 34, wherein said resin enters said aperture, and the method includes a step of remachining said aperture after said resin has cured.

38. (Previously Presented) A method according claim 26, wherein the curing of said resin is effected by cold curing.

39. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein said first aircraft component is formed of a composite material.

40. (Previously Presented) A method according to claim 26, wherein said cured resin forms a shim.

41-44. (Cancelled).

45. (Previously Presented) A method of joining two aircraft components together, said method including the steps of

providing a first aircraft component formed of a composite material having a surface to be joined to a corresponding surface of a second aircraft component formed of a composite material, said first and second components being so shaped that if joined there would be a gap defined between said surfaces of said first and second components,

providing a resin infusion system comprising a source of resin,

placing said first aircraft component against a surface of said resin infusion system,

effecting flow of said resin from said source of resin into said gap by means of suction, thereby substantially filling said gap with resin, the flow of the resin out of the gap being restricted by means of a barrier, at least a part of said barrier being formed by a surface of said resin infusion system, and said barrier and said first aircraft component being, during the filling of said gap, removably fixed in position relative to each other by means of a pressure difference,

curing said resin while between said first aircraft component and said barrier so as to form a shim on said first aircraft component,

separating said first aircraft component and said barrier after said resin has cured, and

joining said second aircraft component to said first aircraft component and said shim.

46-48. (Cancelled).